

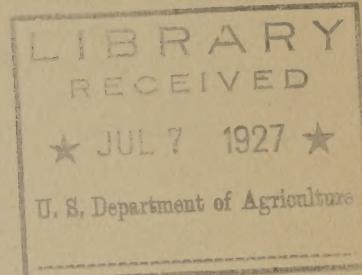
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Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics

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Report of
Committee of Dairy Section
Central States Extension Conference
Madison, Wisconsin
May 10 - 12, 1927



Modified Plans of Testing

The cow-testing association has proven such a potent factor in economical production and herd improvement that a large demand has arisen to extend the advantages and results of this work to the widest limits possible, particularly to areas where cows are not kept in sufficient numbers to warrant the organization of a regular cow-testing association. After thoroughly discussing a number of modified testing plans, it was the sense of the dairy section that these plans should not be considered as substitutes for cow-testing association work, but rather as supplements to such activities and that they would possibly lead to the organization of regular cow-testing associations when conditions became favorable.

Some executives present felt that with the facilities at hand for supervision, the limit of expansion in cow-testing association work has been reached, thus adding to the need for other methods of expanding the advantages of testing.

The consensus of opinion was that modified plans of testing in use should be given a fair trial and regarded as experiments and that such records be kept as will furnish data from which a thorough study can be made and conclusions drawn.

Herd Test Plan

The Herd Improvement Plan as carried on in Wisconsin was explained and discussed. The Dairy Section felt that this work also should be considered as experimental and that the 65 herds now under herd test would serve as a fine nucleus for study.

Proved Sire Work

Since selection, feeding, care and management of dairy cows can not bring results beyond the inherent ability of cows to produce, it was brought out that more attention must be given to the selection of bulls in order that the producing capacity of cows may be increased. With the increased production of the cows in cow-testing associations, as well as that of the average

cow of the country generally, it is imperative that improvement in the quality of bulls be brought about if production levels are to be maintained and carried higher. The possibility of testing work as a means of testing sires through comparison of the records of their unselected daughters with the records of their dams, was strikingly brought out in an analysis of the records of some 200 bulls in cow-testing association herds. From these results it is clear that cow-testing associations might be considered as bull-testing associations as well. There is a grave question whether any system of testing intended as a basis and guide for herd improvement that does not furnish records by which the daughters of a bull can be compared with their dams is a success.

Feeding Schools

The results of feeding schools as brought out in the discussions at the conference show them to have been an effective means of extending, especially to dairymen with small numbers of cows, improved feeding practices. These schools have led to improved cropping systems which have resulted in the more economical production of milk.

Calf Clubs

Judging from the growth of calf club work and the interest manifested in it by the dairy specialists, it is a fundamental project in dairy extension work, having in it possibilities for influencing not only the young people but the practices of the older ones as well.

Cow-Testing Association Organization

The conference discussion on organization of cow-testing associations brought out the fact that since the work has been so well organized and the results are so obvious, it is no longer necessary for the dairy specialist to do the detailed work in signing members as was formerly the case. It was felt that when interest in an association in a community was expressed the dairy specialist should go to the community and explain the value and details connected with the operation of the association. The actual signing of the members should be done by a local committee. After this work has been completed the dairy specialist should return to the community to perfect the organization and to get the work of testing under way.

Tester Training

Since the cow-tester is the most important factor in preserving the life and usefulness of a cow-testing association, it was clearly brought out in the conference that greater care should be exercised in the selection and training of testers for their work. Among the most important possibilities for improvement in the quality of testers are the following:

1. Tester training schools at the colleges.
2. Selection of Smith-Hughes graduates who have had sufficient training in dairying.
3. District and State testers' conferences.

District conferences have proved a worthwhile means for improving and further training of testers after they have been placed in charge of associations. It was brought out that 77 per cent of the States doing testing work have definite systems of tester instruction.

Tabulation of Records

The conference stated that the tabulation of the records of cow-testing associations, including the comparison of the records of the daughters of association bulls with the records of the dams of the daughters by the Bureau of Dairy Industry is a distinct service to the States, and that this work is being extensively made use of by the dairy specialists.

Standard Rules

The standard rules for cow-testing association operation as adopted by the American Dairy Science Association were discussed and it was suggested that a change be made to provide that all cows, regardless of the length of time they were in the herd, should be included in the yearly herd summary. This would include cows sold for beef, or those taken out of the herd for any other reason.

Herd Record Books

It was recommended that a pedigree blank for the bull should be added to the cow-testing association herd book and that space should be provided in the book for the previous record of the cow. A suggestion was also made that larger spaces be provided in the books for figures.

Summer Meeting of American Dairy Science Association

In mentioning the summer meeting of the American Dairy Science Association to be held at Lansing, Michigan, in June, it was urged that insofar as possible all dairy specialists should attend, since important subject matter would be presented that would better fit dairy specialists for the conduct of their work.

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